

## Hearst Center Red House Studios

The Hearst Center—a municipally-funded community arts center in Cedar Falls—is located in a quiet residential neighborhood, tucked on a boulevard that runs east from the campus of the University of Northern Iowa, and about a mile south of the downtown Cultural and Entertainment District.

As the Hearst passed its 30th anniversary, staff and board members had earnest conversations about goals for the next 30 years. What community needs were not being met? Could the Hearst leverage its municipal support to meet some of those needs? Community listening sessions were held, input from various stakeholders was gathered, and site visits were made to other communities to learn about new spaces, programs, and partnerships in community arts. It was a bit by chance, however, that one visit sparked an idea, which began a year-long process of turning a city-owned residential rental property (yes, a red house) next door to the Hearst Center into the Red House Studios, a space that accommodates four artist studios. The addition of two partnerships (with the University of Northern Iowa and Cedar Falls Schools) made the program feasible - both financially and in terms of scope - and today the program is nearing its third year. The artists that have made the Red House Studios their studio home away from home vary from university professors to local practicing artists, who work in photography, video, drawing and painting, and tattooing. The Red House also serves as a model/trial for an anticipated (and hoped for) community studio program that is being imagined as part of a larger vision for the Hearst Center building expansion project planned for 2024/2025.

The Red House Studios and Visiting Artist Program were borne of a desire to implement a tangible shift in scope for the Hearst Center. It was one part kismet, one part timing, and one part long-term planning that allowed for the right resources to align making the program possible, but it was not a straight line. This presentation may spark ideas about resources in your community that could be leveraged to create a similar program through creative partnerships.